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FIRST REPORT

FROM THE

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

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FIRST REPORT.

THE COMMITTEE of SECRECY, to whom the ſeveral Papers, which were preſented (ſealed up) to the Houſe, by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon the 1ſt and 2d Days of this Inſtant April, by HIS MAJESTY's Command, were referred; and who were directed to examine the Matters thereof, and report the ſame, as they ſhall appear to them, to the Houſe;—

HAVE proceeded, with the utmoſt Diligence, to the Conſideration of the Matters referred to them; but, from the Extent and Variety of the Information reſpecting different Parts of the United Kingdom, which has been laid before them, they are under the Neceſſity of requeſting the Indulgence of the Houſe for a ſhort Time, before they can ſubmit the Reſult of their Inveſtigation on all the Points to which it has extended.

YOUR Committee, however, think it incumbent upon them to ſtate, without Delay, that they have received the fulleſt Proofs that the dangerous and treaſonable Conſpiracy for the Subverſion of the Conſtitution and Government, which in the Year 1798, in Concert with a Foreign Enemy, produced the horrid and ſanguinary Rebellion in Ireland, and the Progreſs and Extent of which, in Great Britain, is detailed in the Report of the Committee of Secrecy in the Year 1799, has never been abandoned.—The Hopes and Activity of the Diſaffected were checked, and their Intentions

 fruſtrated

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fruſtrated by the Vigilance of Government, and by the Effect of the Laws which were adopted: But their Principles and Deſigns remained unchanged, and they have for ſome Time, and more eſpecially of late, been endeavouring to take Advantage of the Diſtreſs occaſioned by the High Price of Proviſions, for carrying thoſe wicked Deſigns into Effect:—It has particularly appeared to Your Committee, that the Inſtigators of theſe Proceedings have, on repeated Occaſions, ſecretly expreſſed their Wiſh for the Aggravation of thoſe Evils, which they everywhere endeavour to uſe as a Pretext and Engine for exciting popular Diſcontent:—They appear to have derived their principal Encouragement, from the Preſſure ariſing from the Scarcity; from the Hopes of Aſſiſtance from a Foreign Enemy upon the Invaſion of Great Britain or Ireland; and from the Expiration of the Laws before referred to, which from the concurrent Teſtimony from different Parts of the Kingdom, they acknowledge and declare to have been the principal Obſtacle to their Meaſures.

Within a few Weeks paſt, and to the lateſt Period to which the Information received by Your Committee can apply, their Activity has been great and encreaſing in the Metropolis and in other Parts of the Kingdom; every Effort is employed that can tend to diſturb the Public Tranquillity; and recent Intelligence has been received from different Quarters, which juſtifies Your Committee in believing, that, at this Moment, the immediate Object of the Diſaffected, is to endeavour, by a ſudden Exploſion, to avail themſelves of the Interval which may ſtill take place before thoſe Laws can be renewed.—The dangerous Syſtem of a ſecret Confederacy, under the Obligation of an unlawful Oath, which prevailed in Ireland, and afterwards extended itſelf to Great Britain, has been revived, with additional Precautions, for the Purpoſe of eluding Detection, and of enſuring Concert, Secrecy, and Diſpatch: And, it appears to be in Agitation, ſuddenly, by theſe Means, to call numerous Meetings, in different Parts of the Country, at the ſame Day and Hour, to an Extent which, if not prevented, muſt materially endanger the Public Peace; and that among the Perſons moſt forward in inſtigating theſe

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theſe criminal Proceedings, are ſome of thoſe who had been detained under the Suſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act, and who have been recently releaſed from Confinement.

Theſe Conſiderations, Your Committee have felt themſelves bound to ſubmit, in the firſt Inſtance, to the Wiſdom of the Houſe, believing that any Delay in ſo doing would be attended with material Danger to the Country; and, for the ſame Reaſon, they feel it a Duty incumbent on them, to take the firſt Moment of ſtating to the Houſe, their ſtrong and unanimous Opinion, grounded on the Information which they have received, that no Time ought to be loſt in renewing thoſe Meaſures of Precaution, which the Wiſdom of the Legiſlature has before adopted; particularly the Act for the Suſpenſion of the Proviſions of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the Act to prevent Seditious Meetings; which, while they remained in force, were attended with the happieſt Effects in preſerving the Public Tranquillity, and which Your Committee have the moſt confident Hope would have the ſame ſalutary Operation, under the preſent Circumſtances.

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